

# Historic District Commission Staff Report: Evaluation of Significance (for Demolition) HDC2013-00595, 114 Crabb Avenue

**MEETING DATE**: 8/20/12

REPORT DATE: 8/13/12

FROM: Robin D. Ziek, Preservation Planner,

Planning, CPDS 240.314.8236

rziek@rockvillemd.gov

**APPLICATION** Evaluation of Historic Significance

**DESCRIPTION:** (demolition proposed)

APPLICANT: RCG Development

Rob Gilroy, Agent 24 Waddington Place Rockville, MD 20850

**FILING DATE:** 7/18/12

RECOMMENDATION: Staff finds that the property at 114 Crabb Avenue does not meet HDC criteria for

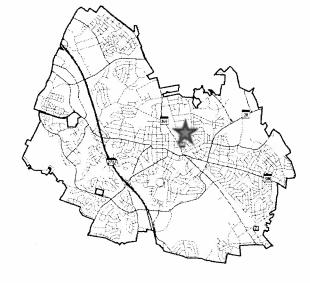
historic designation, in that it is not associated with a significant historic event, person, or pattern of events as detailed in Rockville's historic contexts, and does not exemplify

Rockville's mid-20th century architecture or heritage.

EXECUTIVE Rob Gilroy filed an evaluation request on 7/18/12. Per 25.14.d.1 of the Zoning SUMMARY: Ordinance the HDC will evaluate a property for historic significance if the surger

Ordinance, the HDC will evaluate a property for historic significance if the owner contemplates full demolition of the dwelling and so requests. Staff provides historic research and makes a recommendation to the HDC concerning the historic significance

of the subject property.



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- 1. Aerial Map
- 2. Zoning and Land Use Map
- 3. MHT Research Form

Letters received - none

### RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the property at 114 Crabb Avenue does not meet HDC criteria for historic designation, in that it is not associated with a significant historic event, person, or pattern of events as detailed in Rockville's historic contexts, and does not exemplify Rockville's mid-20<sup>th</sup> century architecture or heritage.

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

**Location:** 114 Crabb Avenue (see Attachment 1)

Applicant: RCG Development (Rob Gilroy, Agent)

Land Use

Detached Residential (High Density) Designation:

**Zoning District:** R-60 (see Attachment 3)

**Existing Use:** Single Unit Detached Residential

Parcel Area: 0.337 acres + 0.341 acres

**Subdivision:** H.L England's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to Rockville, Block D, Lots 12 & 13

**Building Floor** 

1,052 sf Area:

Dwelling Units: 1

# **Vicinity**

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning				
Location	Zoning	Planned Land Use	Existing Use	
North	R-60	Detached Residential High Density	Detached Residential High Density	
East	R-60	Detached Residential High Density	Detached Residential High Density	
South	R-60	Detached Residential High Density	Detached Residential High Density	
West	PPOS & MXB	Public Park and Open Space & Mixed Use Industrial	Public Park and Open Space & Mixed Use Service Industrial	

# Site Analysis:

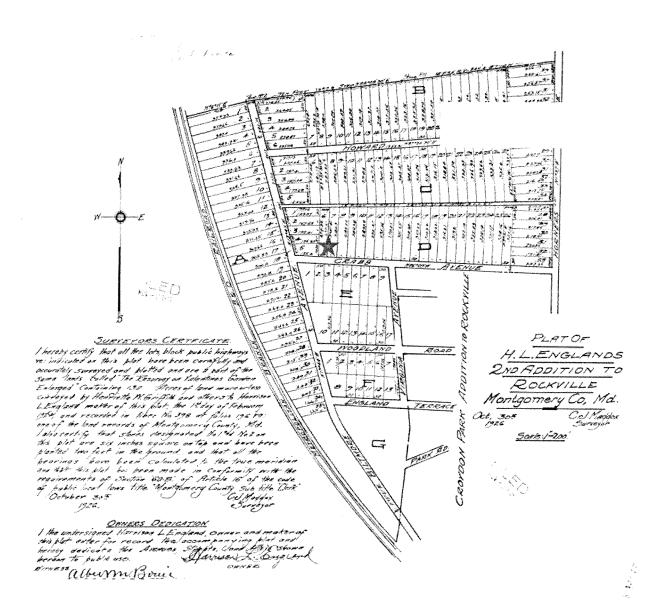
The subject property is located at the west end of Crabb Avenue, at the edge of the residentially-zoned neighborhood. West of the subject property, the remainder of Crabb Avenue is zoned for industrial usage, although a narrow strip of Parkland (PPOS) is reserved to separate the residential from the industrial properties.

The property is comprised of two lots containing a total of 0.678 acres (29,533 sf). Each lot measures 50' wide x c. 300' long. These deep lots are unusual in the City of Rockville, but were platted in this vicinity, particularly on Crabb and Howard Avenues. Today, the back yard has the appearance of a large meadow, with a few trees in the yard and additional trees at the edges. A public alley runs along the north edge of the property.

The house was constructed across lot lines for Lots 12 and 13, at the normal setback of ca. 25' from the public right of way. The house sits at the high point of the property, which then falls down to the north, to the basement level. From there, the remainder of the property is relatively flat topographically. The neighborhood consists of single family homes. The area was developed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and there is a mix of houses from the early 1930s through the 1970s. There are mature trees along the street, and the subject property has a large maple tree in the front yard, in the southwest corner of the property. There are some other trees and shrubs on the property.

# **Historic Significance:**

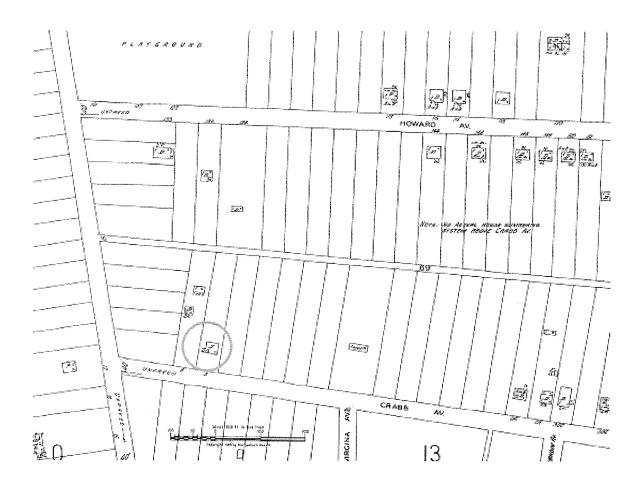
The property was part of the 1926 subdivision, *H.L. Englands 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to Rockville*. Mr. England had previously subdivided *H.L. England's Addition to Rockville* (1922) on the west side of the railroad line. He also recorded *H.L.Englands 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to Lincoln Park* (1926) on the east side of the railroad line, and just to the north of the plat with the subject property. He established the real estate company, Suburban Properties, Inc., and served as President of that company.



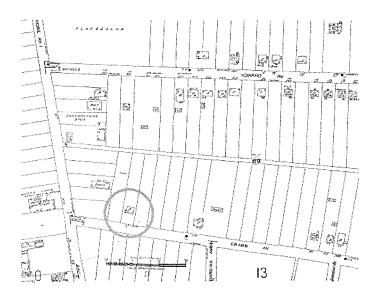
Deed research indicates that the Property was sold by H.L. England to Norman E. and Mary E. Pyles in 1944. As Mr. Pyles was born in 1909 (census records 1930), he was 35 at the time of purchasing the lots. The United States was still fighting in the World War, and building materials were difficult to come by. The land may have been a good purchase, as the lots had been available since 1926.

The 1940 census indicates that Norman (age 30) and Mary (age 27) were renting in the unincorporated area "Croydon Park." Norman had been born in Washington, D.C., and Mary had been born in Virginia. They had two young daughters, Elizabeth (age 9) and Mary (age 5). Both girls had been born in Washington, D.C., so the Pyles had moved out to the Rockville area between 1935 and 1940. He recorded his profession as "truck driver, for the county" and she recorded her profession as "waitress, working in a lunch room." They both worked 52 weeks a year, and he earned \$840/yr. and she earned \$400/yr.

The house is shown on the 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, indicating that the house was built sometime between 1944-1949. When the Pyles purchased the property, the neighborhood was in Montgomery County. Only with the mass annexation of 1949 was this area brought into the City of Rockville.



By 1960, there were a few more houses in the neighborhood, but only one additional house is shown along Crabb Avenue, while several new homes are illustrated along Howard Avenue.



Mr. Pyles died after a long illness in 1976. Mrs. Pyles continued to live at the property and she died in 2011.

An evaluation of historic significance begins with a historic context. For the City of Rockville, the *Historic Resources Management Plan* (1986) provides a series of seven historic contexts. This property falls within Contexts #6 and #7. The property was platted for development in 1924, at a time when many of the close-in farms were subdivided for new houses. This important aspect of Rockville's history is analyzed in "Historic Context #6: Maturation and Expansion of the County Seat: 1873-1931." This context focuses on the suburban development of Rockville after the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad opened in 1873. The subject property was created with the recordation of *H.L. England's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to Rockville* in 1926, one of many subdivisions platted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and listed on page 127 of the *Heritage Resources Management Plan*. This part of current Rockville was outside of the city until the 1949 annexation, and there is no further discussion of this in Context #6.

Historic Context #7 covers the years from 1931 – present (1986). By this time, the private automobile was becoming commonplace, and the focus of development was on the large-tract subdivisions such as Twinbrook and Hungerford that were further away from the railroad line. These subdivisions were formatted as largescale Levittown-style developments. The subject property, however, was constructed under an earlier model with one person platting the larger subdivision, and selling individual lots to people who then undertook construction of their own homes. The context lacks a discussion of Rockville during the war years, and this might be further researched in a second edition of this management plan.

The City lacks an updated 20<sup>th</sup> century context, but the recently published *Historic Buildings Catalog* provides a citywide architectural survey that does include 20<sup>th</sup> century houses. While the subject property was not part of the survey of pre-1945 buildings undertaken in preparation of the *Historic Buildings Catalog* because it is listed in the state tax records as having been constructed after 1946, the *Catalog* does includes a few examples of Minimal Traditional houses similar to the subject property (p.87).

Historic designation is recommended if a property meets one or more of the HDC's adopted Criteria. A staff review of these criteria, with staff evaluations, is provided below.

#### HISTORIC DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The following checklist is used to assist in evaluating the significance of nominated properties. Standing structures and sites, including archaeological sites, must be determined to be significant in one or more of the following criteria to be found eligible for historic designation:

### I. Historical and cultural significance:

- A. Event: the site of a significant historic event *No.*
- B. Person: identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society *No.*
- C. Pattern of Events: exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities

No. The house is a fair example of its type, but with several alterations. In addition, the property is unusual in that the owners maintained a large amount of open space with side lots that they never developed.

D. Cultural Value: has character, interest, or value as part of the development, or cultural heritage of the City, County, State, Nation *No.* 

# II. Architectural and design significance:

- A. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction *No. The building is only a fair example of its type due to alterations.*
- B. Represents the work of a master No.
- C. Possesses high artistic values No.
- D. Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction N/A
- E. Represents an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape. No. The major character-defining feature associated with this house was the large number of open lots maintained by the Pyles. These have already been sold and new homes constructed thereon.

## Historic Integrity of structure and site:

• Alterations to house: porch railings, rear deck, new windows)

• Alterations to site: associated side lots sold and built upon

Level of site significance: N/A

\* \* \* \* \*

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Posting of sign on property three weeks prior to meeting Postcard notices sent out two weeks prior to meeting Staff report posted on City's web site one week prior to meeting

#### **FINDINGS**

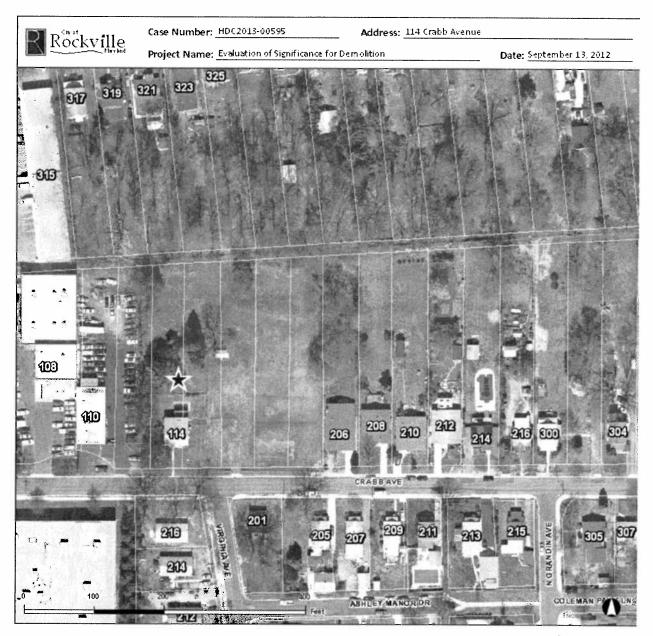
Finding that the property does not meet the Criteria for Historic Significance (as reviewed above), staff recommends that the HDC does not recommend this property for historic designation.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1. Aerial Map
- 2. Zoning and Land Use Map
- 3. MHT Research Form

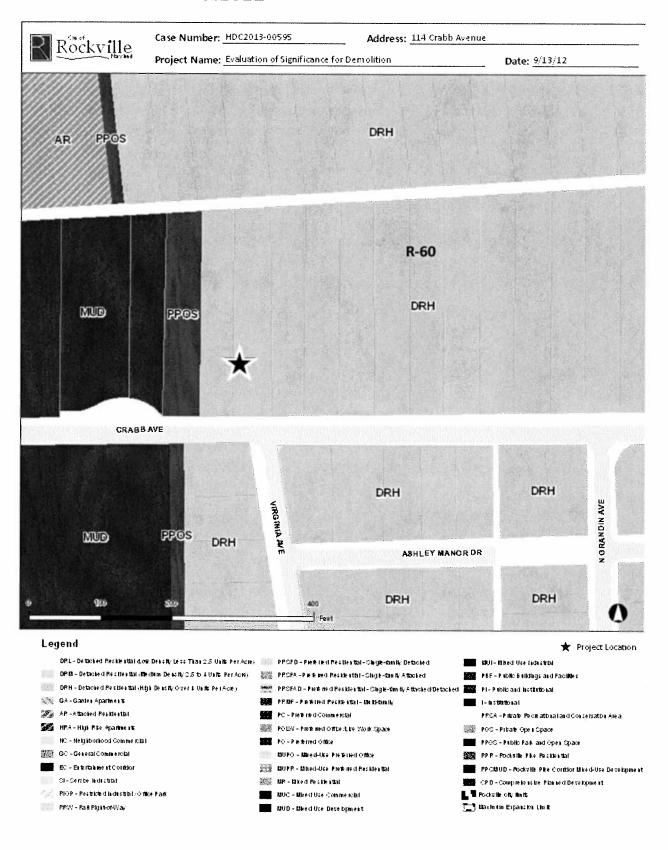
Letters received: none

# **AERIAL MAP**



roject Location

### ZONING AND LAND USE MAP



Inventory No.

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

1. Name of	Property	(indicate preferred na	ame)		
historic	The Norman an	d Mary Pyles House			
other					
2. Location					
street and number	r 114 Crabb Ave	nue			not for publication
city, town	Rockville			-	vicinity
county	Montgomery				
3. Owner of	f Property	(give names and mailing	addresses of all own	ers)	
name	RCG Developn	nent			
street and numbe	er 24 Waddington	Place		telephone	240-793-6843
city, town	Rockville		state MD	zip code	20850
	Rockville  Location of	tax map GR33  F Additional Data  n National Register District		er 43696 folio kk D, Lot 12, 13	256 tax ID number 154341
DeteDeteReco	ermined Eligible for the sermined Ineligible for the sermined Ineligible for the sermined by HABS/HAI bric Structure Reporter:	n Local Historic District the National Register/Maryland r the National Register/Maryla ER t or Research Report at MHT	-	***************************************	
Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource	Count
district _xbuilding(s)structuresiteobject	publicx_privateboth	agriculturecommerce/tradedefense _x_domesticeducationfunerarygovernmenthealth careindustry	landscape recreation/culture religion social transportation work in progress unknown x vacant/not in us other:	Contributing Contr	

7. Description		Inventory No.
Condition		
excellent <u>x</u> good fair	deteriorated ruins altered	

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

#### Summary description

The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Norman and Mary Pyles house at 114 Crabb Avenue is a brick Minimal Traditional cottage in East Rockville. The house was constructed across two lots, at the west end of a larger property comprised of five separate building lots. This is the only residence that was built on the property. The lots are the typical 50' width, but are exceptionally long at ca. 300', and this property was exceptional in the neighborhood for the amount of open space.

#### Comprehensive description

The mid-20th century Norman and Mary Pyles house at 114 Crabb Avenue is a brick Minimal Traditional cottage in East Rockville. Facing south on Crabb Avenue, the house sits at the west end of a larger property comprised of five buildable lots. The property is located at the edge of the residential neighborhood and is adjacent to industrially-zoned property. The house property is set off from the remaining property with a chain link fence. The back yard is untended at this point, and there are trees along the edges. A large maple tree is located in the front yard, at the southwest corner of the property.

A concrete front walk leads to the front concrete steps of the house. The front elevation is divided into three unequal sections: two brick side portions with single windows in each flank the middle entry section with white vertical board siding under the front gable porch. This siding appears to have been added over the original brick siding, as seen at the picture window trim. This central portion includes the single-width front door set off center (west of center) and the living room "picture window." The porch consists of a concrete deck with brick facing, with metal wrought iron railing, and two "S-curve" metal corner columns. The front-gable portion of the front porch is clad in wide clapboards painted white. The windows are covered with metal awnings.

The east side elevation included two windows with metal awnings at the first floor level, and two basement windows below. A rear addition is exposed for two levels, as the grade cuts down to the basement level along this side to permit a drive-in garage in the rear portion of the house. The garage is clad in brick while the portion of the house above the garage is clad in wide board siding under a shed roof. This appears to be a later addition to enclose what had been an open deck.

The north (rear) elevation shows two levels across the entire house – first floor and basement. The rear elevation includes a brick section extending 2/3s of the extent of the house from the west side to a wood clapboard-enclosed section above the garage. This enclose framed section includes a doorway out to a new deck, and corner metal windows.

The west elevation is entirely brick. There are three windows spaced across the first floor level, with metal awnings to protect them. There are three basement windows. The grade cuts down to the basement level only at the rear basement window.

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

#### DEED RESEARCH

Liber/Folio	Date	Grantor	Grantee
43696/256  Lots 12, 13 in Block D	3/26/1912	Paul W. Athey, Personnal Representtive of the Estate of Mary E. Pyles (died 3/2/2011); surviving tenant of the entirety of Norman E. Pyles (died 5/10/1976)	RCG Development LLC
931/360 Lots 12-16, Block D	2/24/1944	Suburban Properties (H.L. England, President)	Norman E. and Mary E. Pyles

H.L. England's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to Rockville (plat Book 4, Plat 341) (1926)

130 Acres part of "The Resurvey on Valentines Garden Enlarged" surveyed by Henrietta W. Griffith and others to Harrison L. England maker of this plat, Feb 1, 1924; recorded in L398/196.

8. Signific	ance			Inventory No.	
Period	Areas of Significance	Check and j	ustify below		
1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 1900-1999 2000-	agriculture archeology architecture art commerce communications conservation	economics education engineering entertainment/ recreation ethnic heritage exploration/ settlement	industry invention landscape architecture law literature maritime history	performing arts philosophy politics/government religion science social history transportation other:	
Specific dates	1924; 1944; 1912		Architect/Builder		
Construction da	ates between 1944-1955.				
Evaluation for:	National Register	N	Maryland Register	_not evaluated	

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The property was part of a 130-acre parcel of land, part of "The Resurvey on Valentines Garden Enlarged" that was surveyed by Henrietta W. Griffith and others as part of a sale to Harrison L. England on February 1, 1924 (L398 / F196). H.L. England proceeded to lay out a subdivision and the entire property was recorded as H.L. England's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition to Rockville (plat book 4, Plat 341) in 1926.

H.L. England established a real estate business known as Suburban Properties, of which he was the president. He sold lots 12-16 in Block D to Norman E. and Mary E. Pyles on 2/24/1944 (L931 / F360). The Pyles lived at this property until they died. Mr. Pyles died in 1976, and Mary Pyles died in 2011. Their house was the only dwelling on their large property, and the overall character of the property was maintained as an open field.

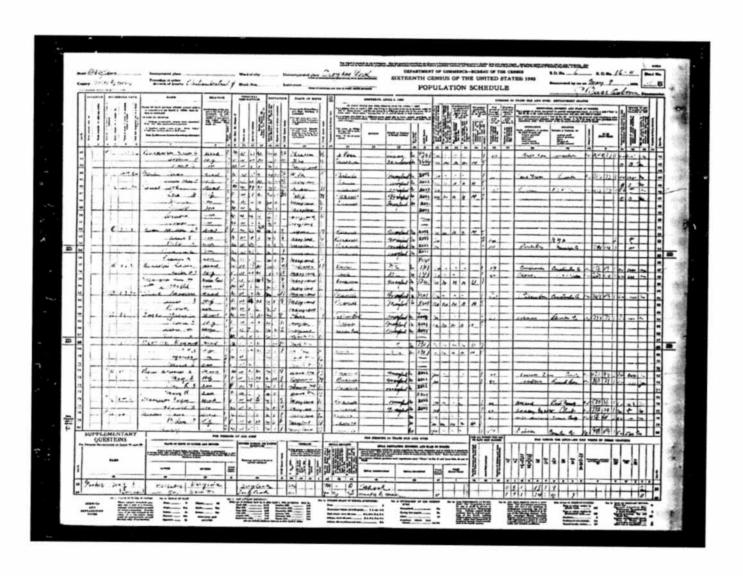


# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1



# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

### MARY E. PYLES (Age 97)

Of Rockville, MD, on March 2, 2011, daughter of the late James W. and Minnie Lambert Fisher; wife of the late Norman Pyles. Predeceased by two children, Elizabeth Earle and Mary Athey, she is survived by three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; one brother, Benjamin Fisher of Rockville, and a son-in-law, Paul W. Athey of Brinklow, MD. Friends may visit at the MURIEL H. BARBER FUNERAL HOME, 21525 Laytonsville Rd., Laytonsville, MD on Monday, March 7 from 10 to 11 a.m., with funeral services to follow at 11 a.m. Interment Parklawn Cemetery.

- Published in The Washington Post on March 6, 2011

In Memoriams

The Washington Post (1974-Current file); Jun 13, 1976; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (1877-1995) pg. 24

LOVING WIIE, Marie

# Card of Thanks

PYLES, NORMAN E. (BUSTER)
The family of NORMAN E. (BUSTER)
PYLES, wish to express our sincere
thanks and appreclation to our neighborhood friends and all our many
other friends for their acts of kindness,
messages and cards of sympathy extended to us during our recent bereavement. To his many friends that
he did not see in his time of litness.
THE PYLES, MARY, LORRAINE and
PORGEY.

9.	Major	<b>Biblio</b>	graphica	al Refe	rences
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Inventory No.

Montgomery County land records

Washington Post

U.S. 1940 Census records

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property
Acreage of historical setting
Quadrangle name

Output

Ou

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by			
name/title	Robin D. Ziek, Historic Preservation Planner		
organization	City of Rockville	date	8/22/12
street & number	111 Maryland Avenue	telephone	240-314-8236
city or town	Rockville 20850	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Hist

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Department of Planning 100 Community Place Crownsville, MD 21032-2023 410-514-7600